



MICHIGAN
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE



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In this week's Lansing Update:

1. [House Judiciary Committee Takes Testimony on Statute of Limitations Bill](#)

House Judiciary Committee Takes Testimony on Statute of Limitations Bill

Legislation that would eliminate the statute of limitations for sexual abuse for a period of two years was discussed this week in the House Judiciary Committee. [House Bill 5699](#), sponsored by Rep. Deb Kennedy (D-Brownstown Twp.), would also extend the statute for filing a claim of sexual abuse by 30 years. The legislation addresses religious institutions and non-profit organizations, but fails to eliminate the state immunity enjoyed by public schools and other state government institutions.

Michigan Catholic Conference testified against the legislation stating that the proposed law is unjust and discriminatory as it only targets private institutions and that the bill undercuts sound judicial practices by changing the law retroactively. Statutes of limitations ensure due process and fairness, and prevent 50, 60 or 70 year old claims from coming forward that are literally impossible to defend, especially when the accused is dead.

Also testifying against the legislation was a victim assistance coordinator who detailed the steps the Church has taken since 2002 when the [Charter for the Protection of Young People](#) was drafted, which includes a zero tolerance policy for credible claims, background checks and fingerprinting of Church employees, and [Safe Environment](#) policies that help children become aware of abuse themselves.

While opposing the introduced version of the legislation, the Conference offered its support for a substitute bill that does not eliminate the statute of limitations for a two year period, but would extend

the statute of limitation by five years, rather than the initially proposed 30. The [Judiciary Committee](#) [Link no longer available —*Ed.*] has not stated when or if it will address the legislation again.



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